



Calder Chronicle

NUMBER 25

Phone (03) 5447 7022

Email: big.hill.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Website: www.bighillps.vic.edu.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BigHillPrimarySchool/>

THURSDAY, 27TH AUGUST 2026

CALENDAR

Monday, 31st August

Wednesday, 2nd September

Thursday, 3rd September

Friday, 4th September

Monday, 7th September

Thursday, 10th September

Monday, 14th September

Wednesday, 16th September

Thursday, 17th September

FRIDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER

Junior Unit Gym continues

Indigenous Literacy Day

Senior Unit Gym continues

Year 3/4 Camp meet at Bendigo Train Station by 9:40am

Foundation Gym continues

Year 3/4 Camp returns to Bendigo Train Station at 4:00pm

Senior Unit Gym concludes

Junior Unit Gym concludes

Foundation Gym continues

RACV Safety Squad Incursion - Foundation & Junior Unit

LAST DAY TO ORDER PIZZA

Foundation Gym concludes

Pizza Day – no normal food items available but ICED TREATS WILL BE

LAST DAY FOR TERM 3 – EARLY DISMISSAL 2:30PM

School Organisation

Dear Parents, Carers and Greater Community,

This week has seen a continuation of wet and cold weather, with the sun finally breaking through yesterday 😊. Week 7 has been very busy once again, but it's been wonderful to see children settled in class and working to the best of their ability. Behaviour has also been terrific this week 😊.

STAFFING

We have had Alice away for all this week due to illness and we look forward to seeing her return next week – fingers crossed. During Alice's absence we have had Ebony Davidson and Eve Acquisto filling in to cover Art and Library lessons. Stacey remains on leave this week also, enjoying some time away with family. We also look forward to her return soon. As mentioned last week, I'm away today and tomorrow as I attend the VICTORIAN PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE in Geelong. During my time at the conference Ainsley can support and is best reached by phoning the Office or emailing her if you have the need Ainsley.Stanley@education.vic.gov.au.

GYM PROGRAMS UNDERWAY

It's been another big week of gym with the Junior Unit attending Monday, the Senior Unit attending Wednesday and our Foundation commenced their gym program today 😊. As we move into Week 8, the gym program for Junior, Senior and Foundation will continue.

BOOK FAIR AND PARADE

Our Book Fair was a great success with many children and families enjoying a browse and the opportunity to purchase a book. Due to the high number of visits, we will have a nice percentage of the money spent to buy new books for our library – something that will benefit all children. A big thankyou to Wendy, Erin and other staff who supported each night with set up, pack up and payment. Monday also kicked off in style with our BOOK WEEK PARADE. It was wonderful to see so many children dressed up as their favourite book characters... and a large crowd there too! It's always lovely to see the community coming together to celebrate the children and their love of books, dressing up and having some fun! Thank you if you were able to make it... and a special shout out to Emma for organising the event 😊. Book week has been a focus during Week 7... and I've particularly enjoyed seeing many children visit the library at breaks to do a Book Week character treasure hunt. Lots of fun!

YEAR 3/4 CAMP NEXT WEEK!

Our two-day Year 3/4 camp is on next week, with the majority of our Year 3/4 students heading off to Swan Hill for an overnight camp at the Pioneer Settlement. Students and staff will travel to and from by train – reducing the costs significantly 😊. Families are reminded to have their child/ren at the Bendigo Train Station ready by 9:40am on Thursday, 3rd September and pick up at the same location on Friday, 4th September at 4:00pm. If you have questions, please reach out directly to Dean/Emma, Pauline or Wendy. If your child is not going on camp or they are a Year 2 in Wendy's class – please ensure they are still sent to school as provision for learning to continue is in place. Year 2's will work with other Year 2's in the Junior Unit. Year 3/4's not attending will be placed into the Senior Unit with work to complete.

INDIGENOUS LITERACY DAY AND INCURSION

Indigenous Literacy Day is celebrated across the country on Wednesday, 2nd September and like other years, we will have a focus on this event within classes. As a way of shining the light on Indigenous Literacy, we have a fantastic incursion organised for our Middle and Senior Students on Monday, 31st August. "Muyan Story" will visit and present an engaging show for our students, covering indigenous art and culture. A fantastic way to celebrate Indigenous Literacy Day early 😊. Consent & payment of \$5 per child is due on COMPASS before the incursion. Thanks for your attention to this.

PARENT CARER OPINION SURVEY

Each family has the opportunity to participate in the Parent Opinion Survey. Details of the survey, how to access and the PIN have been shared with the community on Compass as a post. Please try and take 15 minutes of your time to complete this survey and ensure each family only does it once.

FATHERS' DAY STALL AND RAFFLE

Next week we have our wonderful P&F setting up for our annual Fathers' Day Stall, with sales offered to students on Wednesday, 2nd September. Classes will have allocated times to visit and make a purchase, with gifts priced to sell from \$1 up to \$20. Raffle books have been sent home for sale by each family... and there are some great prizes, including a family pass to an AFL game of your choice in the 2027 season. Can you help on a stall? Absolutely... but you need to have a WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK that is current. Give the Office a call if you can assist... I know the P&F are often short-staffed and would love the extra help on Wednesday 😊. The raffle will be drawn late next week and winners announced in the newsletter – so get your tickets back ASAP to not miss out. Didn't get a book? Collect one from the Office or ask for another to be sent home.

CHANGES TO WHAT BIG HILL PS DOES ON AN EXTREME FIRE DANGER DAY THIS SEASON

The Department of Education works with the CSIRO to assess bushfire risk for schools and early childhood services every year. The assessment uses current data from national and state bushfire authorities. All facilities are assessed on a scale of 0 (highest risk) to 6 (lowest risk). Categories 0-3 are placed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register. As a result of this year's review, our school's bushfire risk category has increased. Our school is now assessed as Category 2. This change is based on the latest risk information and updated data. This means our school will develop a relocation plan for days when the fire danger rating in our local government area is Extreme. We are currently developing our pre-emptive action plan with the support of the Department of Education. On Extreme Days we plan to relocate to Kangaroo Flat Primary School. More details will be shared soon. The safety of students and staff remains our priority, and the school will continue to be supported in its [bushfire preparedness](#). We also encourage families to develop and follow their own [bushfire survival plans](#). To help families distinguish what school looks like for Big Hill PS on different fire danger days, we will be using this graphic below to help communicate clearly:



MODERATE: Big Hill Primary School will **OPERATE** as usual

HIGH: Big Hill Primary School will **OPERATE** and Monitor Conditions

EXTREME: Big Hill Primary School to **RELOCATE** to Kangaroo Flat Primary School

CATASTROPHIC: Big Hill Primary School will **CLOSE**

In the coming weeks we will also share an event on COMPASS encouraging all families to indicate if they would usually send their child to the relocated school OR keep them at home or with carers on an Extreme Day. On such a day instead of dropping your children off at Big Hill PS, you would drop them off at Kangaroo Flat PS where they would be met at the gate by Big Hill PS Staff. Those staff would then run classes with our students only. We would also have separate play times to Kangaroo Flat students – in essence we run a Big Hill PS day with students and staff onsite at Kangaroo Flat, but have separate work areas and play times, including different drop off and pick up times. We are not allowed to have anyone, including staff, onsite at Big Hill PS on an Extreme Day. If you could attend to this event when posted to COMPASS, it will give us the number of students we expect to have onsite at Kangaroo Flat PS on Extreme Days to assist with planning. This is just a guide only and of course we expect families will either send or keep home depending on work schedules and what else is happening for the family on such days. More information will be shared in the coming weeks in preparation for the fire season, including what will happen to our Ravenswood Bus Service etc. Also understand this decision is made by the Department of Education under guidance from Emergency Management and in the best interests of keeping students, staff and community safe. Keep an eye out for more information soon.

FREE HAMPERS OR INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

On the foyer table we have all the items pictured available for FREE to any family who would like them 😊. Stock is renewed every Thursday, so please come and help yourself – we all can use some help sometimes and we get the items for free, so please come and have a look! If you can't make it in, please let us know and we can send home items with your child if you prefer. This week we have more long-life full cream & lactose free milks, along with vegemite and honey 😊



MCKERN FRESH FRUIT

We would like to thank the McKern Steel Foundation and sponsors for supplying the fruit, the students love receiving this delivery each week.

Here are Everly and Hudson with their:

'banana phone' and

'mandarin hat'



BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday to Elisabeth A & James W.

Week 8 is looking very busy indeed, particularly for our 3/4s...so with that in mind, please endeavour to keep your child/ren rested over the weekend so they make the most out of the week ahead. I do hope your Friday is wonderful and the weekend even better with an opportunity to get outside and enjoy some clear skies...fingers crossed.

Until next week...

Matt Pearce, Principal

FOUNDATION NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For showing enthusiasm when participating in our Book Week celebrations:

FC *Evander R*
FN *Cash J*

Catherine, Nicole & Nick

JUNIOR UNIT NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For making a fantastic effort with their Book Week Parade costume:

JAR *Rylan E*
JJ *Willow S*

Ainsley, Roberta & Lauren

MIDDLE UNIT NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For great participation in the Book Week Parade:

MED *Hendrix M*
MP *Clementine W*
MWA *Lily C*

Emma, Dean, Pauline, Wendy & Amanda

SENIOR UNIT NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For staying in control of their emotions and making positive choices in challenging situations:

SB *James W*
SJ *Jacob S*
SK *Freddie M*

Brett, Jayden & Kate

THE RESILIENCE PROJECT

Staff have chosen the following students to receive this week's GEM award for:

Gratitude

Foundation	Chaz G
Junior Unit	Ollie B
Middle Unit	Elaina H
Senior Unit	Abbi-Rose L
Specialist	Maisie Q

BIG REWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to the following students who have received 15 Big Rewards, well done 😊:

🌈 *Huddy H*

🌈 *Lewis T*

🌈 *Mason EH*

SOCIAL MEDIA & CYBER SAFETY

Navigating the Digital World: Your GPS for the Online Adventure

The Social Media Ban:

So... What Are Our Kids Actually Doing Online Now?

If you are a parent of a child under 16, you have probably heard a lot about Australia's new social media restrictions. Perhaps you thought, *"Well, that's sorted then. No more social media. Problem solved."*

If only parenting were that easy. Unfortunately, the digital world did not pack up its swag, throw a snag on the barbie and head home when the restrictions came into effect.

Recent Australian research and reporting are showing that many tweens and teens are still finding ways to use online platforms, while others are shifting towards messaging, gaming and other digital spaces.

And this is the bit parents need to know:

The social media restrictions have changed the digital landscape for young people. They haven't removed the digital landscape.

So where are they going?

If a particular social media platform becomes harder to access, young people don't necessarily stop wanting to chat, share, send photos, play games and keep up with their mates. *They look for another way.* Messaging apps, gaming platforms, group chats and other online services can become the new digital hangout.

And let's be honest, our kids are pretty good at finding a back door when someone puts a "DO NOT ENTER" sign on the front door.

Some young people are also continuing to access platforms they are not supposed to be using, including through accounts that were already established or by finding ways around age restrictions.

That means parents cannot assume:

"They're under 16, so they're not on social media anymore." They might not be using the same apps they were using six months ago. They might be using something else entirely.

But isn't the ban supposed to stop this?

The Australian restrictions place responsibility on certain social media platforms to prevent Australians under 16 from having accounts.

That is different from saying: "Children under 16 cannot go online." They absolutely can. Our kids still use the internet for schoolwork, gaming, watching videos, chatting with friends, creating content, researching random questions and, apparently, watching a 47 minute video explaining something they could have learnt in approximately 90 seconds.

The restrictions are about particular social media services and the responsibilities of those platforms. They are not a replacement for parents talking to their kids about being safe online.

The sneaky shift to messaging

This is one of the things parents need to keep an eye on. If your child isn't using a traditional social media platform, you might think there isn't much to worry about.

But a group chat can still have:

- 20 kids talking at once
- photos being shared
- screenshots being taken
- people being added or removed
- arguments kicking off
- rumours spreading
- inappropriate content appearing
- pressure to respond immediately
- someone being deliberately left out

Sound familiar? Take the word *social* out of social media and you still have a bunch of kids interacting with other people online. The technology might have changed. The behaviour hasn't.

And then there's gaming...

Gaming is another space worth paying attention to. For many kids, gaming isn't simply sitting in front of a screen playing a game anymore. It can involve voice chat, text chat, private messages, friend requests, groups and communities.

Your child might tell you: "I'm just playing Roblox."

And technically, yes. But they may also be chatting to people they know, people they don't know, or people they *think* they know.

That's why asking, "[What game are you playing?](#)" isn't always enough.

Try asking: "[Who are you talking to while you're playing?](#)" That's a much more useful conversation.

The screenshot problem

Here's another one parents need to remember. Even if your child thinks something is private, someone else can take a screenshot:

- ❖ A message sent in the heat of the moment can become tomorrow's screenshot.
- ❖ A silly photo can be saved.
- ❖ A private conversation can be forwarded.
- ❖ A voice message can be recorded.

Something intended for one person can suddenly become everyone's business. And once something has been shared, you have very little control over where it goes next. This is why the old school message still matters:

Before you post, send or share, stop and think:

- Would you be happy for it to be shown to your teacher?
- Your parent?
- Your nan?
- The entire Year 5/6 cohort?

Because once something is online, you don't get to choose who sees it next.

So what should parents actually do?

You don't need to become a digital detective with a trench coat, magnifying glass and three different parental control apps. You do need to stay involved.

Ask questions

Instead of only asking:

"Are you on social media?"

ask:

"What apps are you using?"

"Who do you chat with?"

"Are there group chats?"

"Can strangers message you?"

"What happens if someone sends something inappropriate?"

Know what your child is using:

Have a look at the apps on their device.

Find out what they do.

Check the privacy settings.

Look at who can contact your child.

You don't need to understand every button and setting.

You just need to know enough to ask sensible questions.

Talk about the workaround mentality

If your child tells you that their friends have found a way around an age restriction, don't just launch into:

"You absolutely must not do that!"

Talk about why the restriction exists. Ask what could go wrong. Talk about fake accounts, strangers, inappropriate content, screenshots and pressure from other kids. The goal isn't simply to stop them getting around a rule. The goal is to help them understand why the rule is there in the first place.

Keep the conversation going

Online safety isn't a one-off conversation. It is not:

"Here's your phone. Here's the rules. Good luck, champ."

Technology changes too quickly for that. The app your child is using today might be replaced by something completely different next year. The important thing is that your child knows they can come to you when something goes wrong. Even if they've made a mistake. Even if they've broken a rule. Even if they think they're going to be in trouble.

The bottom line

Australia's under 16 social media restrictions are an important change, but they are not a digital force field around our kids.

Young people are still online.

They are still communicating.

They are still sharing.

They are still playing.

And they are still going to encounter some of the same risks we have been talking about for years.

The platforms might change.

The usernames might change.

The apps might change.

But our kids still need adults helping them navigate the digital world.

So don't just ask:

"Are you using social media?"

Ask the bigger question:

"What are you doing online?"

Because that's where the conversation really starts.

And let's face it, when it comes to keeping our kids safe online, we're all still learning. Even the adults!



*Safe travels on the internet highway,
where your data's the passenger,
and you're the navigator!*

Kate Dole

PARENTS & FRIENDS NEWS

FATHERS DAY!

Our stall / raffle will be held / drawn on Wednesday, 2nd September and we are asking for donations. Here are a few suggestions: Fishing, chocolates, mugs, clear bags, cellophane, camping, books, car cleaning supplies, scarves, gloves, biscuits etc.

THANK YOU SO MUCH TO THEIRCARE for their very generous raffle prize of 4 Tickets to the Medallion Club at Marvel Stadium or 4 MCG seats in 2027.

Raffle tickets have been sent home, but if you didn't receive any or would like more, please ask at the Office as we have spares 😊.

Thank you so much for your support,

Parents & Friends

CANTEEN NEWS

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME 😊

Helpers are wanted between 9:00am – 10:00am or 12:45pm – 1:45pm on Fridays only, once or twice per term.

If you would like to help, please leave your details at the Office and I will contact you.

A current Working With Children Check is all that is required and can be applied online for free.

We appreciate all offers of help as this enables the continuation of the canteen and assists with economical pricing on our extensive menu.

Thank you, *Tammy Fear, Canteen Manager*

COMMUNITY NEWS

JOIN THE 2026 CHINESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE SHOWCASE



The Bendigo Chinese Language Teachers Network is excited to announce two upcoming events celebrating our students' engagement with Chinese language and culture.

More info & consent forms: <https://bsscchinese.notion.site/2026competition>

Online Challenges – Submissions due Fri 18 Sep

- Colouring Competition (PrepGr2)
- Chinese Vase Design (Gr 3-4)
- Hanzi Design (Gr 3-6)
- FanDesign (Gr 5-6)



More info & consent forms: <https://bsscchinese.notion.site/2026competition>

Speech & Singing Competition – Sat 24 Oct @ BSSC

- Categories: Speech & Singing (individual/group)
- Winners may be nominated for the state competition!
- Winning performances will be shared on our event webpage.



For more info & consent forms, scan the QR code.

Celebrate creativity, language learning, and culture – we can't wait to see our students shine!





NBL TAKES OVER BENDIGO

2-6 SEPT



10 TEAMS. 5 DAYS. 1 WINNER.

50% OFF

FAMILY TICKETS

The CODE Sports NBL Blitz takes over Bendigo from 2-6 September, bringing all 10 NBL clubs together for five days of elite basketball, live entertainment and family fun.

The **McKern Steel** community can score 50% off family tickets!

USE CODE: MCKERN50

[NBLBLITZ.COM.AU](https://nblblitz.com.au)

VICTORIA
EVERY BIT DIFFERENT

THEIR CARE (OSHC) NEWS



Big Hill Primary School

Social, enjoyable & fun experiences for children

Develop creativity, life skills & confidence through play

Qualified, caring & engaged staff

Exciting & thoughtfully developed programs

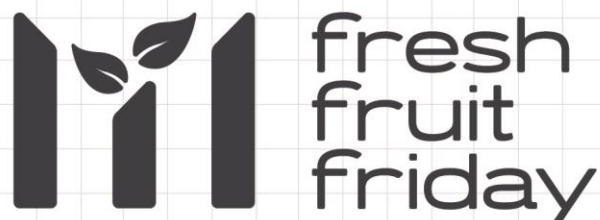
Healthy & Yummy food provided each day

<https://theircare.com.au/>



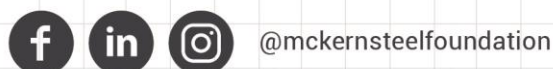
Order on Compass using Friday, 18th September as order date
Orders due by 9:00am Wednesday, 16th September

THANK YOU TO MCKERN STEEL FOUNDATION AND SPONSORS



Running for over a decade,
the program now delivers
1,500kg of free fruit to
Bendigo school children
every week.

 mckern steel[™]
foundation



Made possible thanks to McKern Foundation and our supporting partners:



Want to support the program? Contact us to sponsor and provide more fruit to your school.

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO BE A PART OF THIS WONDERFUL PROGRAM 🍏